

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00736 081521Z
ACTION AF-10

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-----017624 090301Z /66

R 081205Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO USINFO WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7794
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS LUSAKA 0736

FOR IOP/M

FOR IBS/PA, FOR IPS/PA

STATE FOR AF, AF/E AND AF/S

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: -
SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION

LOCAL MEDIA GIVES EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO RHODESIAN INCURSION
ONTO ZAMBIA WITH BOTH ZAMBIAN DAILIES BASING THEIR EDITORIAL
COMMENTS ON THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTING TENSION
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

AS OF THIS MORNING THERE HAS BEEN NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF
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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 00736 081521Z

THE ZAMBIAN CLAIM THAT SIX RHODESIAN PLANES WERE DOWNED DURING THE
ATTACK WHICH REPORTEDLY CONCENTRATED IN THE KAVULAMANJA AREA OF
THE LUANGWA (FORMERLY FEIRA) DISTRICT. RHODESIA HAS
CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE ZAMBIAN CLAIM, ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS
REACHING HERE.

IN AN EDITORIAL PUBLISHED MARCH 8, THE PARTY TIMES OF ZAMBIA AND

THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL, STRONGLY DENOUNCED THE RHODESIAN MILITARY ACTION AND LINKED IT WITH THE CURRENT U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE RHODESIAN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

"IN HIS SUB-NORMAL THINKING, SMITH NO DOUBT IMAGINED THAT HIS UNPROVOKED AND COWARDLY AGGRESSION WOULD INFLUENCE BOTH THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND ZAMBIA INTO ACCEPTING THE DEAL," SAID THE TIMES EDITORIAL. IT ADDED THAT THE "OUTRAGEOUS ASSAULT" ON LUANGWA DID NOT TURN ZAMBIA FROM HER DECISION TO CONTINUE BACKING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. ON THE CONTRARY, "IT PROVES WHAT WE AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT CONTEND THAT UNLESS CONTROL OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY IS IN THE HANDS OF THE AFRICANS THERE WAR IS INEVITABLE."

THE STATE-RUN ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL COMMENTED: "SMITH AND THE BLACK STOOGES WANT TO SHOW THEIR BRITISH MASTERS THAT THEY CAN CONTAIN THE SITUATION AND TAKE THE WAR TO THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH SUPPORT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT."

THE MAIL CHARGED THAT "IT APPEARS THE BRITISH ARE MORE INTERESTED IN LEAVING THE SITUATION AS IT IS BECAUSE IT OFFERS THE BEST TERMS FOR THEIR KITH AND KIN IN RHODESIA."

ADDED THE MAIL: "WHEN THAT WAR IS WON, THE BRITISH WILL HAVE NO REASON TO LOOK TO THE BLACKS IN THIS PART OF AFRICA FOR THEIR FIRENDS."

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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 00736 081521Z

REACTING TO THE INCURSION, ZAMBIAN PRIME MINISTER, MAINZA CHONA DECLARED: "THE ONLY CRIME ZAMBIA HAS COMMITTED IS THAT SHE HAS REFUSED TO SUPPORT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT." ITEM USIS LUSAKA. O'BRIEN

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